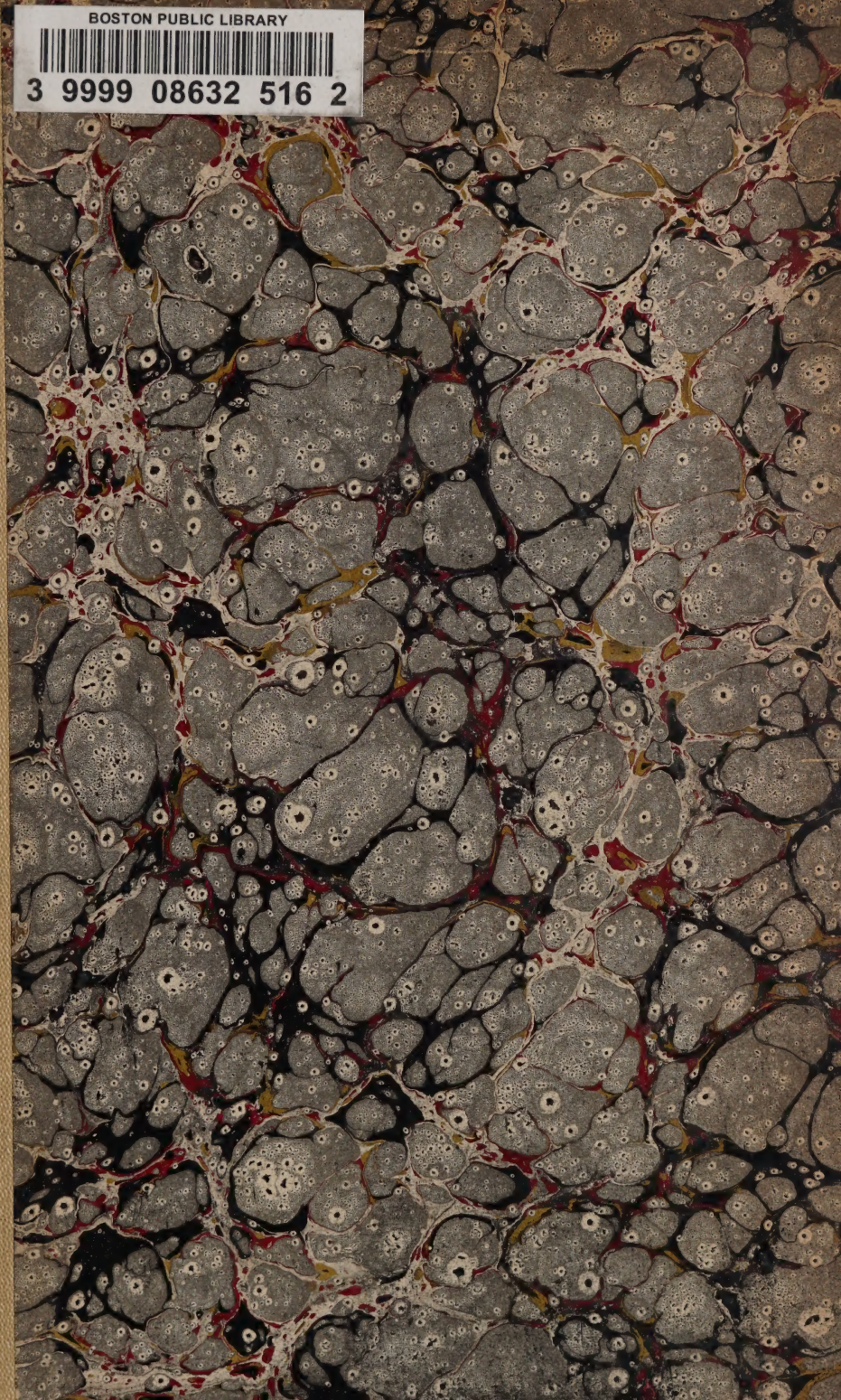


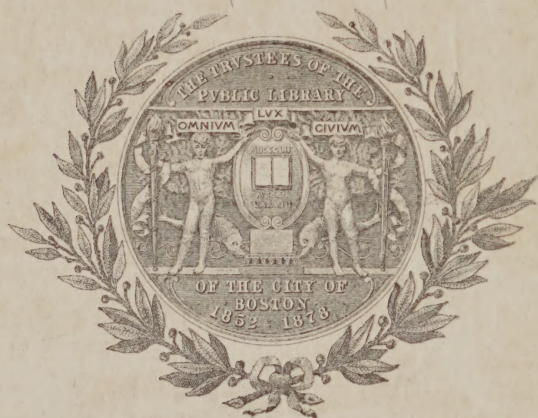
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ANNIVERSARY
S E R M O N

ANNIVERSARY SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF
OUR SAVIOUR, LONGWOOD, BY
REGINALD HEBER HOWE, D. D. ON
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY THE SECOND
MCMII, BEING THE TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY OF HIS RECTORATE

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PUBLISHED BY THE GUILD, BOSTON
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Rev. Reginald Heber Howe, D.D.
June 12, 1908

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ANNIVERSARY SERMON.

"Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—II Corinthians iv., 5.

"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known."—Habakkuk iii., 2.

Twenty-five years ago to-day I concluded a little more than five years of happy service as Rector of Christ Church, Quincy, and on Sunday next, Quinquagesima Sunday, at a summons which seemed a bidding to a larger work, severing with no little pain ties as sacred as any that we know, entered upon my duties here. The close of this Lord's Day and Saturday next week-day will round out, therefore,—I can hardly believe it,—a quarter century rectorate of the Church of Our Saviour, Longwood.

Every instinct within me recoils, so far as I personally am concerned, from taking any note whatever of the fact, save to quicken and deepen within me a sense of responsibility. Visions of what might have been done far outnumber those of what has been, and lead more naturally to great searchings of heart, as one thinks how great a treasure is committed to his charge, in the beautiful words of the Ordinal, "to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, to seek for Christ's sheep, that are dispersed abroad." But something is due to custom; it is a large section of the history of a Parish as of a human life, and many are worshipping and working with us to-day whose only knowledge of the Parish is as they see it now, and to whom a review of the past twenty-five years may not in the way of information and stimulus be without its interest.

Twenty-five years ago, Longwood, so called, only a section of the Town of Brookline, numbered comparatively

few houses. The community was like a little family by itself. Every one knew his neighbor. Beacon Street was a country road less than fifty feet wide. Some of the larger trees now standing by the side of the Electric-car tracks were inside the curbstone of the sidewalk. The communication with Boston was by railroad from Cottage Farm and Chapel Station, or else by coach, starting from Coolidge's Corner and depositing its passengers at the door of a small shanty in the then open country this side of West Chester park, now Massachusetts avenue, there to await the next Malboro-street horse car. Chapel Station was a small wooden building, reached by steps downward from the foot of Carlton street, and was Station and Postoffice combined, where each family had to call for its letters. Across the track from it were three stores, a grocer's, a thread and needle and a plumber's and farther along a number of cheap tenements. Muddy River was a dirty stream meandering through an unsightly marsh, a favorite breeding-place of the Longwood mosquito, in point of numbers and size almost a typical creature. So you would have seen Longwood then. You see it for yourselves as it is now. The expectation was that it would be quickly built up, but for about eight years not a house was erected. The first were the two on Carlton street, between Beacon and Ivy, and the third the Rectory, up to that time the Rector having rented the house No. 6 Monmouth Place. The widening of Beacon street in 1891, and a little later placing thereon a line of cars, gave the first impulse to development and growth, until now, though in some portions Longwood is as rural as ever, along that thoroughfare it is scarcely to be distinguished from a section of the City.

An old photograph framed and hanging in the Robing-room, for today in the Church porch, shows the Church as it then was, standing alone on this lot, the grounds rough, and in the rear grown with underbrush, a wooden stable hard by. For a while, with the exception of a short period

when we hired first the parlor of the house opposite, now the Longwood Club, and then the little cottage on Colchester street, the Church or some private house served the purpose for all meetings of whatever kind. To my suggestion that we needed to erect a Parish Room, it was at first replied, "we have the Church, what need we more?" But the necessity for it became more and more urgent, and in 1880 the present Room was built, and soon the wonder was how we had ever done without it. Hardly a day passed that it was not in use, a centre for the growing activities of the Parish.

The building of the Parish Room was part of a larger plan which we hoped one day to see realized, namely, the erection of a Rectory and the convenient connection of the same with the Parish Room and the Church by a covered Cloister. We had not long to wait, for in 1885, God put it into the heart of one of our members, Mrs. Amos A. Lawrence, to build and give to the Parish a beautiful and convenient house for use for all time of the Rector. The gift acted as a stimulus to others, and found the Parish ready to respond to the call that they should build at the same time the Cloister, connecting and unifying the whole group, which now for beauty of position and design and for convenience of arrangement is unique among the Churches of the Diocese. The year 1893 brought another enlargement and improvement. Upon the death of Mrs. Lawrence her children as a memorial erected yonder Transept, fitted with its own Altar and Prayer desk, for week-day services, and the adjoining Choir room, Robing room and Organ chamber, ready for the new organ, since placed therein.

A long list of other improvements and gifts during these years, many of them memorials, is found printed in the Year Book, with the names of the donors, some of the principal of which only, I will simply mention. Almost each year witnessed something. In 1879 the first Choir stalls; in 1880 stained glass windows in Parish-room, me-

memorial; in 1881 Chancel and Parish-room decorated; in 1882 Chancel floor tiled; in 1884 the Corona, memorial, the window, designed by Burne Jones, memorial; in 1885, Church redecorated throughout, another memorial window; in 1885, memorial tablet, and house on Monmouth Place given; in 1887, tiling Cloister by the Guild; in 1888, bronze memorial tablet; in 1889, extending and tiling Chancel floor, and Choir seats by the Guild; in 1893, \$2000 for fund for repairs on organ; in 1895, Angel Lectern, memorial; in 1896, new Chancel windows; in 1897, brass memorial tablet; in 1897, memorial window; in 1899, window, a thank offering; silver-mounted altar book, memorial; in 1900, new \$6000 organ, Church recarpeted; in 1900, pews recushioned. Not a few of these, as you see, are linked with the names of those who, having worshipped and worked with us here, now rest from their labors, and whose memory to generations yet unborn, who never knew them, is thus perpetuated in this House of God dear to them and to us. They recall the names of Lawrence and Appleton, of Gregory and Bush, of Lincoln and Stebbins, of Amory and Cleveland, of Wentworth and Wales, and unite them forever with the Church in that most sacred and beautiful of all associations.

Upon the retable of our altar stand two brass vases, the gift of a member as a memorial to the first Rector of this Parish, from 1868 to 1874, the Rev. Elliott D. Tomkins, who with singular devotion and humility, and with all the fervor and earnestness of his strong Evangelic faith, gave himself for six years to its interests.

To the the second Rector, from 1874-1877, the Rev. Frank L. Norton, D. D., who brought to this, his first Parish, the enthusiasm of youth, brilliant gifts as a preacher and the affection of a genial nature, there is as yet no memorial; but the Bible from which the lessons are now read was his gift.

It was to his suggestion, I believe, that we owe our unusually heavy and beautiful Communion service, the history

of which should not be allowed to be forgotten. Persons were asked to send in articles of silver with which they had some tender association, from their having belonged to some deceased child or friend. Many such were received, and melted, were blended into one Communion service, bearing these memories before the Lord continually throughout the generations.

Oct. 1, 1881, with the favor of some and the reluctance of a few, but as a whole with cordial co-operation, the congregation met my advocacy that our Church be made free, and the doors were thrown open to all comers, with equal rights to any pew or sitting, no pews rented or taxed. Its merits are that it is right in principle, that merchandise is not made of the House of God, that no one of however limited means need absent himself from Church because unable to own or rent a pew, that it promotes a sense of brotherhood among men, that by means of the offertory as a method of support it promotes the making of offerings to God as an element of our worship. And its results have been favorable, both on attendance and on our finances, remarkably so I think, when we consider that by the death within the period of a few years, of three of our members, we were deprived annually of \$2500 income. Its principal drawback is that many are not yet educated up to its high ideals, and all are not using it as it should be used to their own good and progress in the duty of giving from highest motives and to the advantage of the Church. It needs but this to put our Parish on a financial basis of which we should all be proud.

Such are some of the changes of these twenty-five years in the place, in our Church edifice, its equipment and its use. But these are only a means to an end. Every Church exists for the good in the fullest and most complete sense of the community in which it stands, and for the promotion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the upbuilding of His Kingdom in the world. If it does not this, it may

have a name to live, but is dead. Indeed, it misses its purpose altogether. To this end I early sought to establish such organizations as without excessive and undue machinery should equip us for the work that belonged to us to do. The first formed was our Parish Aid Society, with its two departments on Employment and on Visiting. At the very outset, there being no resident poor in Longwood, and yet a dense population of them within twenty minutes walk in the Roxbury district, to which, so near to our own doors, I felt a community like this owed a responsibility, for our own good as well as for their betterment or relief an arrangement was made with the Rector of the adjoining Parish of St. John's, by which the region lying west of Parker and Tremont streets was committed to our care. Here, at first independently, but later in connection with the Associated Charities, with which we are now in active union and supplying about half the visitors in that district, both departments have done most of their local charitable work. If you knew what this affiliation meant to them and to us, you would believe that it has been a blessing to both Parish and the neighborhood. At the same time, in its relation to the Woman's Auxiliary in its various departments, and to the City Mission, the Aid Society has taken rank with the largest city Parishes in the amount and excellence of its benefactions to the missionary work of the Church.

Shortly thereafter was organized the Young People's Aid Society, soon to pass into the Guild of the Church of Our Saviour. At first composed of the young women of a single class in the Sunday School, it was later enlarged by the formation of two chapters, the men's and the women's, each having its own organization and method of work, together forming one body. Its object at first being only to raise funds to be used for repairing and adding to the furniture and interior decorations of the Church and Parish Room, in 1883 its purposes were considerably enlarged

and extended towards the advancement of the spiritual as well as the material interests of the Parish, by promoting zeal, order and decorum in all the Church Services, etc. A part of what it has accomplished you have already been told. It is a most active and useful organization, and has raised some thousands of dollars. It witnesses to what, I think, is quite a marked characteristic of our Parish, a fine body of young men and women, with a strong sense of their responsibility to the Church and the Church's work and worship, many of whom I baptized as infants, and of some of them since in turn, their children.

The Longwood branch of the Church Temperance Society and St. Saviour's School, a private week-day school for boys and girls, both served their purpose for a time, the former being usurped by the Men's Chapter of the Guild, and the need for the latter passing away with the growth and patronage of the Public Primary School in the neighborhood.

In 1887, by a member who has taken a deep interest in the Choir from the beginning, as, indeed, in all the interests of the Parish, the Choir Association was formed, having for its object the retention of the relation of those passing out of the Choir to the Parish, and their association with the present members for mutual improvement. The Choir Club since formed, and meeting more frequently, comprises chiefly the present Choir boys, and is for the promotion of friendship among them, and the assisting the Choir-master to improve the Choir. Membership in these has meant to many a boy a lifelong interest in the Church, entrance upon and growth in the Christian life, and subsequent valuable service to the Choir as men.

Were I to touch for a moment upon what I have sought to have characterize the worship and the preaching which have obtained in this House of God, I would say that as to the former it has been my aim to provide the people with a Service that should be reverent and worshipful,

neither excessive in ritual on the one hand, nor bare and bald and shorn of all that is beautiful and helpful on the other, with a devotional, homelike Church to which men would like to come to find rest and peace. And in respect to the pulpit and its message, not to keep back God's loving mercy and truth from the great congregation, not to bring into it subjects of which all receive a plethora during the week in newspapers and periodicals and books, but to preach the Gospel, for which I believe men are hungry, to unfold the Scriptures, to seek to know what was the true teaching of the portion treated, in the light of its connection, and to see its bearing on the great life questions to which the longing heart of humanity looks to it to speak. Well do I know how far short of this I have come, but this at least has been my aim.

During these twenty-five years your offerings for objects within the Parish have been in round numbers, \$147,000; for objects without the Parish, missionary and charitable, \$40,000; total \$187,000. There have been 198 baptisms, 211 confirmations, 70 marriages, 101 burials. The number of communicants in 1887 was 109, the number now is about 300.

But the work of a Christian Church, the chief work it exists to do, no figures can measure, no statistics represent. The quiet work that goes on in the soul of man under the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, upon the Word faithfully taught and preached, upon worship in His Holy Temple, upon the diligent use of all the means of grace, the vows and prayers of consecration, the uplifting of the heart, the penitence, the sense of forgiveness and the blessed peace of God found in communion with Him, as heart after heart has thankfully opened itself to His gracious influence, this blessed progress, the highest, the truest of all, to which all these agencies are only as the means to an end, this no eye can see, no tongue can tell, in its fullness and completeness.

“How silently, how silently,” writes one I need not name of the coming of Christ into the world:

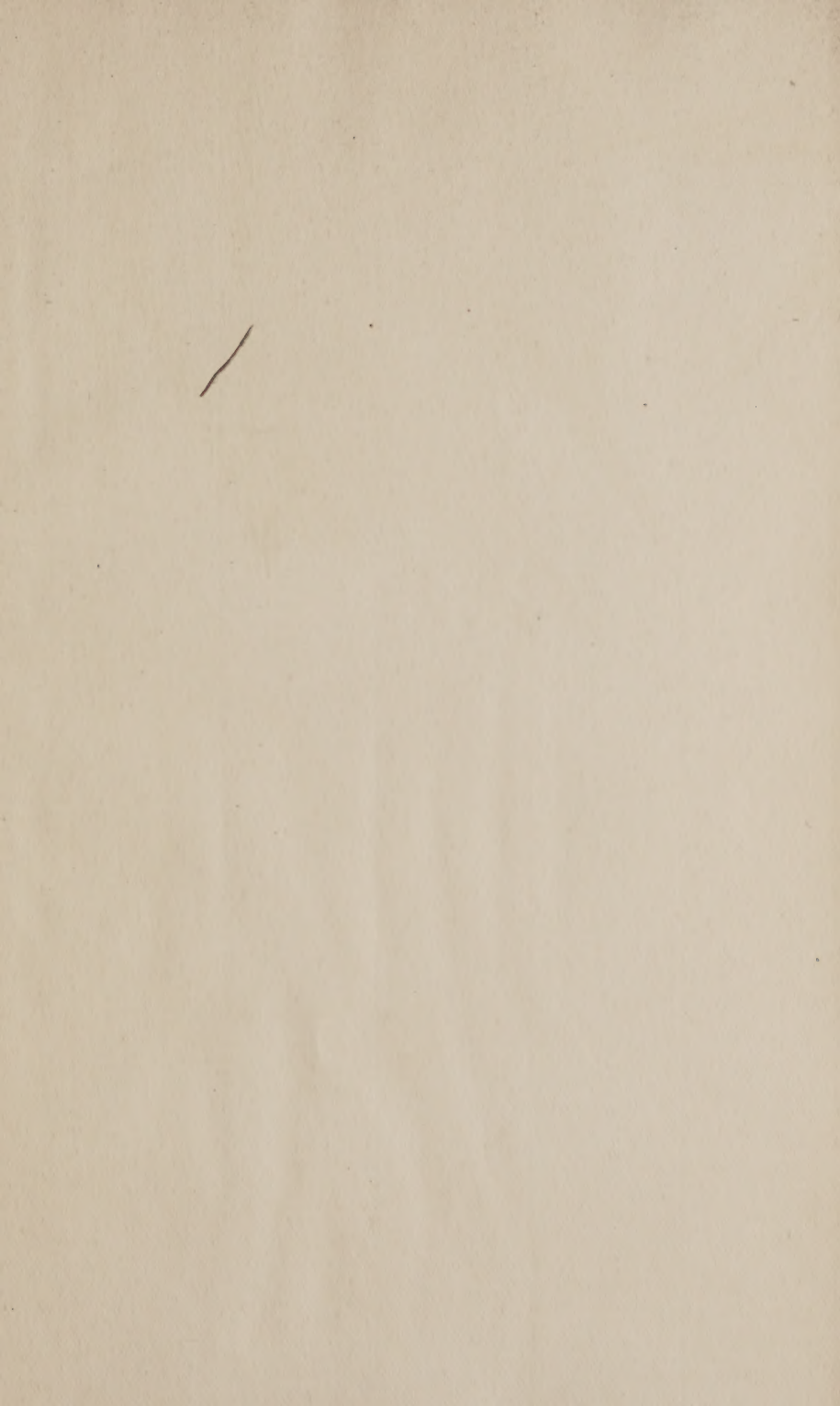
“How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given.
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.”

I know that these blessings have come to many of you. Learn always in all your work, and in all the helps to it you use, to keep them first:—may my eye be single to them;—and may God shower of these upon us more and more as the years go by. Many who used to be here working with us, side by side, have moved to other Parishes, and have merely transferred their interest and usefulness there; many from other places have brought their help to us, and some are fallen asleep. We would remember them, every one, today, and ask that the living may catch the inspiration that ever comes from the good examples of those who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors.

For a happy relationship between Rector and people, our peace unbroken, peace! that prime condition of the usefulness and efficiency of any association; for a hearty co-operation and upholding of my hands in all that I have tried to do, with many helpers with whom it has been a privilege to work, and let me add with a faithful and self-forgetful helpmeet by my side who has given freely of her strength and of her means, I give thanks today, as I ask it for the future, as larger and larger opportunities open out before us and we seek to do our duty by them. For we must not be content with any achievement of the past. We must enlarge.

One cannot think of the greatness of the trust thus committed to him, measure attainment by its possibilities, and not be profoundly humbled. I can only say that for twenty-five of the best years of my life I have lived in and for this Parish, carrying its interests as I have seen them, at

all times within my heart and to the Throne of grace, and that there is no life, in all highest respects, so superbly satisfying as the Ministry. To have been in any measure of some service to some in this high relation, what is there like that? Would that it had been more! "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," that was St. Paul's conception of it. And with that, as our call and prayer for the future I have put these words of the old prophet, spoken so long ago, but appropriate and prevailing still;—"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known." I would see in them myself, I would have you see, the summons to us as a Parish to rise to what it ought now to become, taking its place as, practically, a great city Parish, doing all that belongs to it to do on a larger scale, in a word awakening into its new life, knowing as we pray this prayer, now, in the midst of these years, that it is He that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and asking that He make Himself known ever more and more to both Minister and people.



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